

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this comment on the proposed mandatory imposition of copy protection on HDTV broadcasts to urge the members of the Commission not to adopt the rules in question.

For the record, I am an owner of an HDTV television set and decoder and have been so for longer than most consumers (since July, 2000). I purchased my set on the assumption, based on the timetable published by the FCC for reclaiming spectrum and quotas on amount of HDTV content, that my investment would be a sound one in the long term despite the large up-front cost. To say that my expectations have met with disappointment so far is an understatement, as I can currently receive a grand total of 7 channels' worth of programming out of more than 150. In addition, most of those channels only broadcast in HDTV for selected programs.

To now be faced with the additional prospect that my investment will never amount to anything because of incompatibilities with future copy-protected broadcasts is vexing, to say the least. To be forced to upgrade so soon for a reason that bears no technical merit -- namely, that a greedy content industry already protected by such broad and stifling legislation as the Digital Millenium Copyright Act wants to exert further control on what and how I watch while at the same time inundating me with commercials that are supposed to recoup their investments in the programming -- is appalling. If broadcasters do not want to provide their consumers with the services and products they are asking for, then they deserve to be put out of business. They most certainly DO NOT deserve the protection and mandate of the FCC to force their wares down the throats of all consumers everywhere.

Further, I am worried that this "innocuous" broadcast flag may set a terrible and extremely dangerous precedent for mandated copy protection on other digital distribution mediums -- specifically, personal computers and the internet. To pull an issue from today's headlines, what is to prevent the recording industry from demanding the same protection as the motion picture industry against users of MP3s and CD-ROM burners? I imagine that the FCC would have to comply, given the blatant double standard this would introduce. A digital stream is a digital stream, after all, regardless of the content carried across it.

No one group should have such complete control over not only the content they are providing, but its distribution mechanism and the way consumers who pay good money for it are allowed to use it, as well.

Should these resolutions pass, I will have to recommend to anyone I have influence on -- and certainly, my own wallet as well -- that they not waste their money on equipment crippled for the further profit of an already wealthy industry.

Thank you very much for your time.